

find out that there was no Santa Claus. I had had such a firm belief in him, and, suddenly, this belief was shattered. It is no wonder that children as they grow older become more inhibited. They are not about to let themselves be fooled again, and, as a result, imagination and make-believe become childish activities, something to outgrow.

Another important factor is that at this same point in the life of a child, approximately the early part of the third grade, very little is done in school to stimulate imagination. Play-doh and much of the fun and games are set aside to tackle seriously the problems of reading, writing, and arithmetic. If any art work is done, it is usually copying a work already completed by the teacher, or coloring mimeographed pages.

I do not mean to say that imagination never survives childhood, because it is obvious that it does. *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and Disneyland are two examples of imagination at its greatest. One does not find many adults with a great deal of imagination, though; and, in adults, it is usually too late to develop this sense. The only solution, I feel, is through the education of the child. "Sesame Street" and new experimental schools are a step in the right direction. Other school systems should follow in their footsteps. Dance classes and arts and crafts classes, such as wood workshops, should be made as important a part of the curriculum as the essential academic courses. With opportunity a child can exercise and maintain that special innate ability to imagine. Only if provided with the proper crayon can a child color his world red.

### A CHILDHOOD MEMORY REVIVED\*

Stan Landfair

Spain has left me with many memories. Most of them, however, are not real. Inspired by pictures, the mind of my older years has created them, taking a single slide or snapshot, inserting itself behind

the face of that stocky, crewcut, rosy-cheeked boy and re-enacting for just an instant a scene from those forgotten years, a single frame from a reel of film, alone and out of context. With only several of these isolated, sporadically interspersed acetate scenes left to revive it, nearly a fourth of my life lies hidden from me this way. Lacking both detail and the before-and-after passages, these pictures seem to me almost as meaningless as a book's middle chapter. Collectively, they leave but one lasting impression: that of the red tile roofs and white stucco walls of our home, surrounded by well-groomed gardens, and contrasted above by the always blue sky, below by the thick green grass that in retrospect would seem anachronistic in Spain's dry and barren Andalucía.

In this setting one act does return to mind without probing. It occurred down the road from that home, where several houses were under construction. It was readily visible that these buildings would be, in military tradition, exactly like mine. Set in exactly the same fashion were the carport, the courtyard, and, visible through the holes in the wall which were to be windows, the rooms inside.

With the black-haired boy from across the street, I watched the construction. He was the boy who day after day pushed me out of my swing, the boy who I in turn beat to the ground, the boy whose arm I bit so hard that it bled. He was the same boy who, with his gum-machine penknife, put the scar, which still exists, on my brother's nose. Yet, through the common fascination found in the building of a house, he and this younger version of myself found it fit to stand together and watch. Watching the Spanish workmen, we amused ourselves for an endless time. We watched, I idly and he repeatedly tossing and catching a sprinkler nozzle of a garden hose, as two of the Spaniards carried each end of a picture-window size sheet of plate glass. With perfect accuracy, the black-haired boy threw his toy between the two men and through the sheet of glass.

The immediate confusion leaves me to wonder even now what next transpired, but I remember with the vividness of a picture as the boy's sister, who appeared from nowhere, interjected between each accusation of her brother an accusation of me. The workers, though, were not to be dissuaded, as they had seen all. Four abreast, the boy, his sister and the two men marched up toward the boy's house. Assuming he was "in for it," I walked home.

Hours passed before I thought more about the incident. Perhaps, had the workers not appeared at our door, I would not remember the incident now. Unable to collect restitution from the culprit, they now sought it from me. They laid their charges before my parents that I had broken the glass. Innocent, I protested endlessly. It seemed hours. In the end, however, I capitulated. It seemed hopeless. I admitted my "crime" to my parents, who paid for the damages and punished me twice—once for the act and once for lying.

It was years before my parents and I discussed the real story, but I had yet to forget a single detail. The ordeal had impressed me deeply, because each time I was in a position to defend myself, I was reminded of it. It taught me to stick to my guns, to defend truth to the end, trusting that inevitably the truth will be known.